

Listening to Our Trees

*A Walking Tour of
West Annapolis and Wardour*

Second Edition



*By Elliot Abhau, Colby Rucker
and Ginny Vroblesky*

Illustrations by Laurel Sprenger

Foreword to the Second Edition

Ours is a living neighborhood. In the years since *Listening to Our Trees* was first printed we have faced several blizzards, numerous severe wind storms and a flurry of housing renovations. Some trees reached the end of their life span, or suffered disease. A number of those highlighted in the book are gone. Some have been replaced by individuals who will become landmark trees in the future.

Life changes people as well. We too grow and undertake new challenges. Some, whether people or businesses, are gone. Colby Rucker died in 2004, but not before he was awarded the 2004 Jan Hollmann Environmental Education Award. He spent his life sharing his love for nature with others. We are very grateful he shared it with us. His expertise in tree identification and lively curiosity enabled us to learn to know the trees, our neighbors, in a new way.

These changes have reminded us that we are all part of the flow of history. We decided to reprint the text of the book as it was in 2004 and note tree changes below because it gives a sense of the growth and succession in a community. What is amazing is how much is the same – bigger and older perhaps – but still present. As you undertake this walk, perhaps you can also get a glimpse of our future, whether in young trees or new human endeavors. But hopefully you will also celebrate the gift each life brings to a community, making it a special place.

Ginny Vroblesky, 2011

In Memoriam:

Page 10: One of the Sugar Maples; The Weeping Cherry

Page 17: Eastern Hemlocks

Page 27: Bitternut Hickory

Page 31: Black Locust, Northern Catalpa, Virginia Pines

Page 38: Ginkgo

From the Mayor



Joshua J. Cohen, Mayor
City of Annapolis
160 Duke of Gloucester Street
Annapolis, Maryland 21401

April, 2011

Walking through West Annapolis, we can't help but notice the trees. The trees define the character of our neighborhood. They offer a glimpse of the history left behind by farmers and neighbors who once lived here. Whether it's an old oak tree that once served as shade in a farmer's field or a magnolia planted to brighten a yard in spring, the trees of West Annapolis enhance our scenery and our quality of life.

As the ancient Greek proverb says, "A society grows great when old people plant trees in whose shade they know they shall never sit." Let this guide serve as an inspiration to plant a tree in your own yard. The trees we plant today will enhance the enjoyment of our neighborhood for the generations that follow us.

Josh Cohen
Mayor and West Annapolis resident

Acknowledgements

With special thanks to Unity Gardens and the West Annapolis Civic Association, without whose support and encouragement this project would not have been possible. In addition, we would like to thank the following people who generously shared their knowledge, research and expertise: the staff of the Maryland State Archives; Donna Hole, Chief of Historic Preservation for Annapolis; Sherri Marsh; Jane McWilliams; James Urban; Harold Parkinson; Ces Goldstein; Heidi Petras; Molly Smith; Stephanie Orndorff; Gillian Thelen; and the Annapolis Tree Committee. Finally, to the many residents of West Annapolis and Wardour who shared your “tree tales,” thank you, and may you gather many more.

A Word From the Mayor



Ellen Moyer, Mayor
City of Annapolis
160 Duke of Gloucester Street
Annapolis, Maryland 21401

August, 2004

When I was a child I had four favorite oak trees. They grew in my own backyard and, inspired by my mother's favorite poem, *Trees*, by Joyce Kilmer, I would scoop up their acorns and scatter them in the woods nearby. In a hundred years, I dreamed, they would be giants offering shelter for critters, cooling shade and magical places for other children to climb.

The authors of *Listening to Our Trees* perfectly capture my childhood sense of wonder and curiosity at the majesty of trees. In doing so, they also recount the stories of a neighborhood and so not only connect us to our natural environment but bind us to our community as well.

I hope *Listening to Our Trees* speaks to you as it did me and I hope you, too, are inspired to find your own favorite tree and listen to its stories.

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Ellen".

Ellen Moyer
Mayor of Annapolis

Foreword

Trees in urban areas perform many important functions as part of our “green infrastructure;” they provide wildlife habitat, storm water management, carbon storage and sequestration, and interception of airborne pollutants. They may also provide goods like lumber, pulpwood or firewood.

As importantly, these trees also provide a sense of place, a signature of nature’s own identity in a given location. Trees soften the often hard edges of human improvements to the landscape and can provide a spiritual connection to the greater natural context of a built site, be it a home, office, or school.

“Listening to Our Trees” provides an opportunity to know some neighbors you have seen around the neighborhood over and over but may not know by name—the trees that inhabit your yards and streets. Many of these trees have stood witness to significant changes in the neighborhood over time. Their presence continues to contribute to the atmosphere of the community; they are members of the community worth knowing.

In an article entitled “Planning for Trees,” Planner Harold Arnold notes, “A city without trees is like a world without poetry and music. Tree-lined streets are more than shaded passageways linking buildings. They give us a chance to bring nature into the heart of our communities, while linking us to our past.” Many thanks for providing this wonderful opportunity to make these connections.

Regards,

Michael F. Galvin
Supervisor of Urban & Community Forestry
Maryland Department of Natural Resources

Table of Contents

| | |
|---|-------|
| Introduction | p. 1 |
| Tree Zone Map | p. 3 |
| George T. Melvin's Plan of West Annapolis | p. 4 |
| Start | p. 5 |
| Zone 1: Cliffside | p. 5 |
| The Pinkney Family | p. 7 |
| Zone 2: Former Farm Fields | p. 8 |
| George T. Melvin | p. 9 |
| Zone 3: The Ridge | p. 13 |
| The Norwoods | p. 13 |
| Zone 4: The Old Woods | p. 16 |
| Old Railroad Bridge | p. 20 |
| Zone 5: The Olmsted Design | p. 23 |
| The Giddings | p. 23 |
| Frederick Law Olmsted, Jr. | p. 24 |
| Wardour Bluffs | p. 25 |
| The Transition Zone | p. 29 |
| Zone 6: Our Business Community | p. 33 |
| Tree Checklist | p. 40 |
| Recommended Resources | p. 42 |
| Sponsors | p. 43 |
| Contributors | p. 45 |

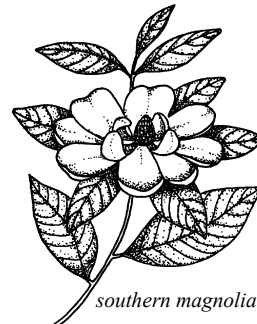
Listening to Our Trees

A Walking Tour of West Annapolis and Wardour

Introduction

We are a neighborhood that loves to walk—whether with our dogs or our friends. Have you noticed that some parts of the community have a different feel? It is a subconscious sense but very real. Why? What is it about that area that makes it special?

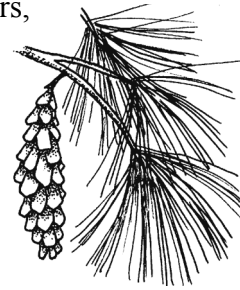
This walking tour is one way to find out. “*If only trees could talk,*” some people say. But in many ways they can! Like our two-footed neighbors, these members of our community have particular likes or dislikes, may be long-term residents or recent arrivals, remind us of life years ago, or can be easily recognized because of their appearance, uniqueness or jobs.



This is not specifically a tree identification tour. Rather, it is an opportunity to discover some particular species or individual trees that can tell us a bit about our own history—whether the natural history of the land or our cultural history. We have at least 116 different species of trees within the community. Using these trees as a guide, we have divided the neighborhood into six zones as shown on the map on page 3: Cliffside, Former Farm Fields, Ridge, Old Woods, Olmsted Design, and Our Business Community. Each zone has a particular beauty, mystery and “feel.”

After the walking tour, we would encourage you to grab a good tree identification guide and begin sleuthing. Use the list at the end of this tour, with the map, to discover the trees within each zone. All should be visible from the road or sidewalk. Familiar trees are like old friends; perhaps you will encounter someone new!

Finally, a word about trees. They are light eaters, not in quantity, but in reality. Sunlight combined with water and minerals provide the food a tree needs to grow. The leaves are a tree's "light" collectors, so the shape of its leaves affects the way it gathers its food. As you walk, observe how the different species place their leaves – it may change during the course of a day as the sunlight shifts.



white pine

Trees, like our community, are constantly changing. The particular trees featured in this tour provide a snapshot of life in 2003-2004. *Italics* will be the clue to stop and look more closely at an individual tree.

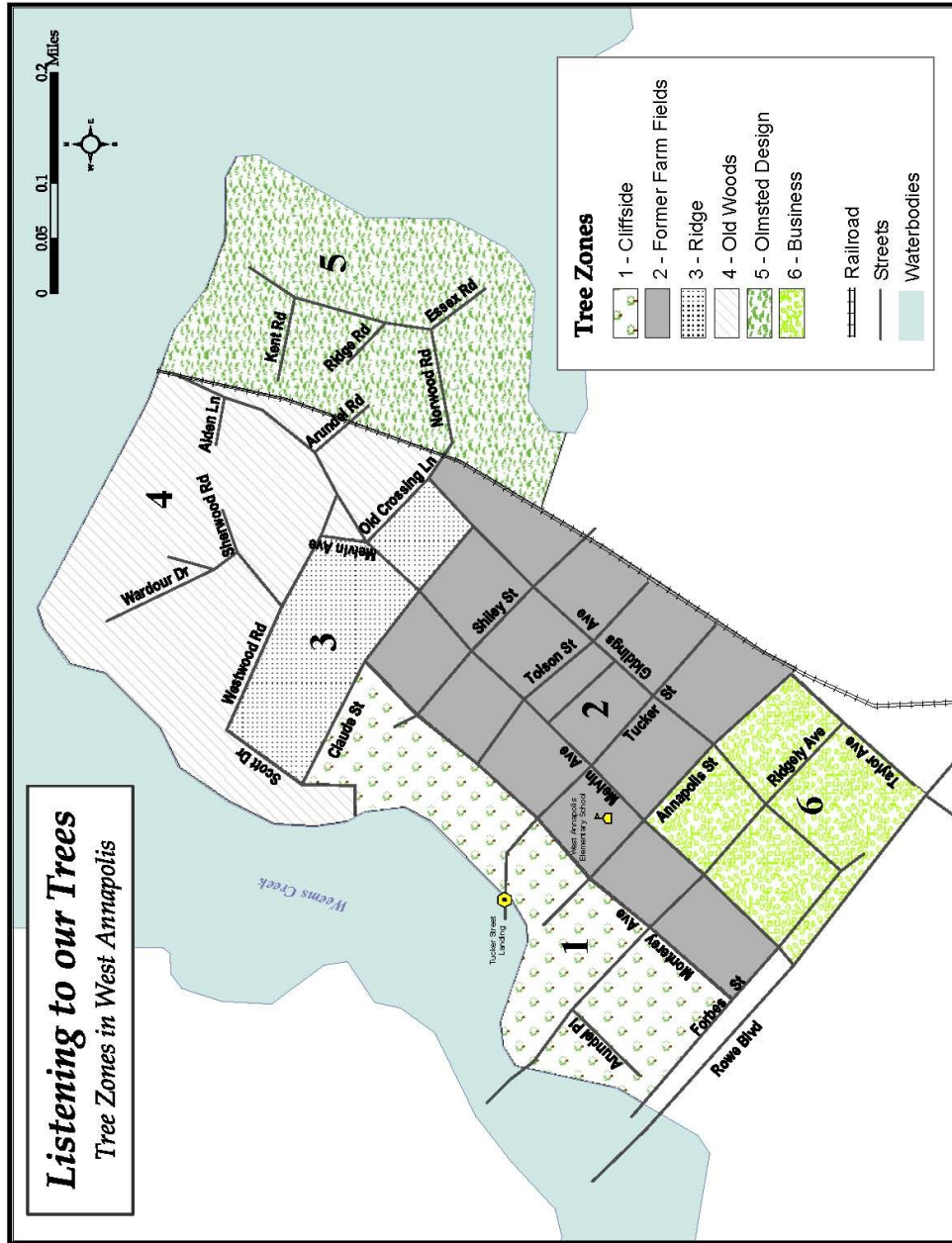
Excerpt from
Thoughts in a Maryland Woodland
By Colby Rucker

Standing on a mossy rise,
I looked off through the November woods.
Away, to the north, beyond the old chestnut oaks,
Across the stream valley, trees on the far hill
Faded to gray against the evening sky.
Nearby, a chill breeze
Touched the pale beech leaves,
And they quivered, unfallen,
As their species has done for centuries untold.

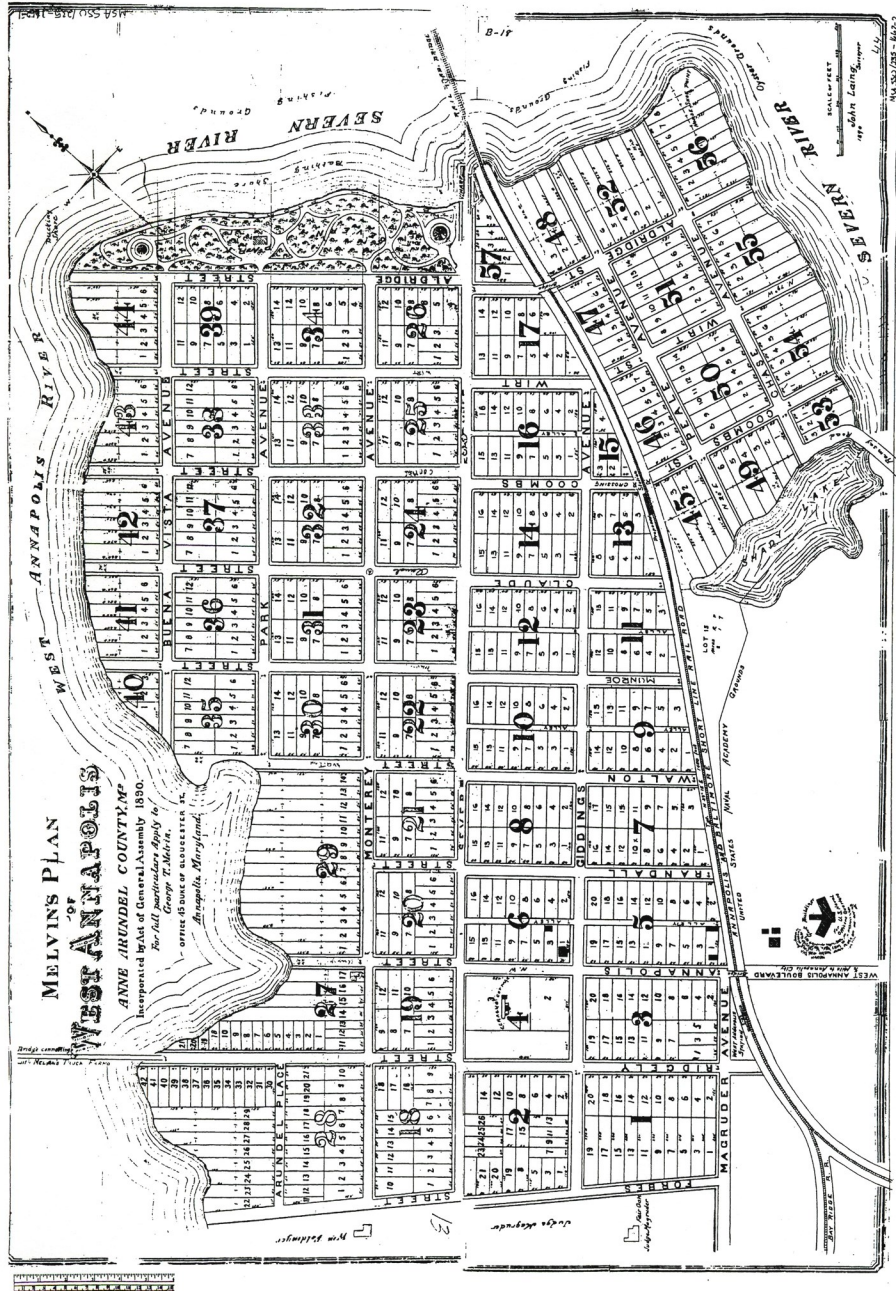
This is the woods of home,
And I thought of things remembered,
And things before my time, some but yesterday
To the ancient trees around me.
The measure of time is everywhere.
These sands and clays knew the age of dinosaurs,
And the sublime contour of these hills, valleys
And terraces is the slow work of a million years,
Punctuated by inroads of the sea...

To read the entire poem, go to <http://www.uark.edu/misc/ents/corner/marylandwoodland.htm>

Tree Zones in West Annapolis and Wardour



George T. Melvin's Plan of West Annapolis



START

Begin at the War Memorial on the Annapolis Street side of West Annapolis Elementary School. Many of the streets within West Annapolis and Wardour have been named in honor of individuals who were an important part of our history. Several are listed here on the War Memorial's bronze plaque. The stories of several more will unfold during the tour.

The trees on either side of the memorial are *red maples*. Native to our area, red maples are common in swamps and floodplains, but they also prosper as a shade tree. In early spring the tiny red flowers give the trees a red glow against the sky, and in the fall the leaves turn brilliant red. Note the bark and leaves. These are important keys to tree identification. Our neighborhood hosts six different varieties of maples, each with its own unique leaf shape and bark.



red maple

Leaving the Memorial, turn right and continue down Annapolis Street to the corner with Monterey Avenue. Baltimore orioles have been spotted among the top branches of the tall *tuliptree* to the right of the street sign. The homes behind the tuliptree are excellent examples of modified American four-square—a housing design popular in the early part of the last century.



tuliptree

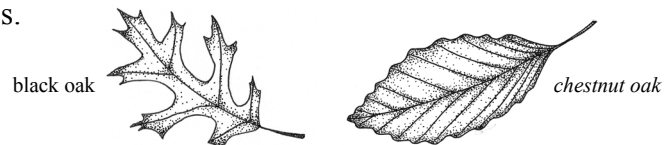
ZONE 1: CLIFFSIDE

Turn right onto Monterey and continue past the tennis courts to Tucker Street. Turn left and begin walking down the hill to Tucker Street Landing.

Among the mix of trees along the bank to your right are two symbols of the Cliffside: the *chestnut oak* and the *black oak*. Chestnut oaks are particularly noticeable across from 313 Tucker Street. A solitary black oak stands behind the group of signs at

Tucker Landing, often securing a variety of small boats.

These trees can be distinguished by their leaves. Those of the black oak are dark and glossy, fuzzy underneath and variable in outline. Leaves at the tops of the trees may be deeply cut, while those lower down will be larger with shallower sinuses or curves. Leaves of the chestnut oak are shaped like a football with fluted edges.



If steep slopes and high bluffs along parts of the Severn River once inspired the observation that the river was “the Hudson in miniature,” steep slopes along Weems Creek are much like the Severn in miniature. Often exposed to the afternoon sun and prevailing winds, these slopes are seldom protected by topsoil or groundcovers, and few species of trees are adapted to the often harsh environment. Both the black and the chestnut oak prefer well-drained soils, mountain communities, or steep slopes and feel at home here.

In earlier times, the inner bark of the black oak was important in commerce as a source of yellow dye. Chestnut oak bark was used in tanning leather for shoes and other needs. Now they grace our hillsides helping to prevent erosion. As you gaze up and down the creek, many of the trees you see are black or chestnut oaks.

As you begin your walk back up Tucker Street, note the large trees behind the homes to the right. Some of the oldest trees in the community are here, growing in the steep but fertile valleys behind the homes on Monterey and Annapolis Street. Most notable is the large *American beech*, whose gray bark is visible over 309 Tucker Street. This tree is believed to be at least 200 years old.



Pause for a moment at the top of the hill and look up and down Monterey. The deeply furrowed bark and feathered compound leaves of the two trees to your right, near the mailbox, proclaim them to be *black walnuts*. Black walnuts have been one of our most valuable timber trees, producing nuts for food, excellent wood for furniture, and stain for leather and wood.



black walnut

These are trees of the interface between old woods and farm fields. Many are found along Monterey. This division between woods and fields has been recorded on old plats of the area. A small estate in the Cliffside zone, “Walnut Bluff,” was the home of Herman Junge, a “mechanical wizard” who held several patents for the rotary lawn mower.

If you had been standing on this spot in 1869 and looked to your left, down Monterey, you would have discovered a barn, servant’s quarters, a corn house and a dwelling. Stretching before you and encompassing the entire peninsula, was the Pinkney farm. (225 ³/₄ acres, a portion of a tract named Norwood’s Beale.) The notice for Public Auction in 1869 said the “soil was of fine quality, producing all the county crops, and particularly adapted to the growth of early fruits and vegetables.” Money was scarce at the end of the Civil War. The trustees divided the farm into three sections hoping to encourage sales, but no one was interested. Finally, the entire farm was auctioned to the highest bidder, Major Luther Giddings, who offered \$46 an acre or \$10,384.50.

Jonathan Pinkney, Sr. emigrated from England prior to the Revolutionary War. He was a Tory, opposed to the Revolution. However, his three sons, Jonathan, Jr., William and Ninian, fought with the militia in the War of 1812. Jonathan Jr. worked as a clerk in Farmer’s National Bank and owned the Pinkney Farm. He died in 1827. His heirs defaulted on debts and the property was auctioned in 1869. William Pinkney, U. S. Attorney General, wrote the Declaration of War for the War of 1812. He was a lawyer, congressman, Envoy to Russia, and U.S. Senator. Ninian Pinkney wrote Travels through the South of France and in the Interior of the Provinces of Provence and Languedoc (1809).

ZONE 2: FORMER FARM FIELDS

Take a step onto this former farm and walk straight ahead on Tucker Street. To your right, the tall English ivy-covered mass is actually two distinct trees: *Sassafras* and *white mulberry*. Sassafras, along with black cherry, black locust and Virginia pine, is a successional species—moving into old fields or abandoned spaces and helping to create the environment for a next step, perhaps a forest. White mulberries were imported from Asia in colonial days to stimulate silkworm production. Now common throughout the area, they provide food for a variety of creatures and are spread by birds.



sassafras



white mulberry

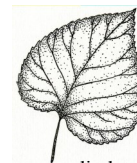
This zone has, by far, the most diversity of trees, with 81 species being easily seen. With its level terrain and fertile sandy soils, this was the primary agricultural area for the farm. Over a hundred-plus years, the area changed into a neighborhood and the trees reflect that progression, from the early natural successional species to the shade and ornamental trees planted in response to landscaping trends.

At the corner of Tucker and Melvin Avenue, the tree with the upward sweeping branches (to the right, at the corner of the schoolyard) is a *zelkova*. This Japanese species has been planted in recent years as an alternative to the *American elm*, once one of our greatest shade trees until decimated by “Dutch” elm disease.



zelkova

Turn left onto Melvin Avenue. The three tall, stately *lindens* (*American basswood*) on your left are a species native to the Appalachians. They have large, heart-shaped leaves and fragrant flowers which produce nectar for a high grade of honey. Native Americans used the fibers of the inner bark to create



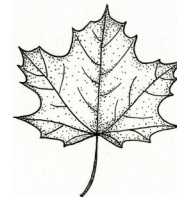
linden

rope or to make thread to sew together mats of cattail leaves. The soft, light wood may be used for carving. Lindens live long lives.

In 1890, George T. Melvin was contracted to develop the Giddings property. He platted the entire area into 50' x 150' lots, encouraging buyers to purchase more than one lot to “grow gardens, fruit lots, poultry farms” and to add shrubs, trees, fruits and flowers. “These will cost little, but with slight care and attention will add to the permanent value of your investment and will make home look home-like.” At the same time, he was developing Murray Hill in Annapolis. There, in order to make the properties more appealing, he planted *maples*, *lindens*, and *elms*. Did he do the same here? If so, could these be some of those *lindens* and be at least 113 years old?

George T. Melvin’s contemporaries regarded him as a vigorous public servant. Growing up in Caroline County, he was a teacher, newspaper editor and studied law under William S. Ridgely. In 1885, both men moved to Annapolis. George Melvin continued to be involved with county newspapers, law and real estate. He purchased and renovated the Maryland Hotel, worked to get the city to become owner of the Annapolis Water Company (becoming the first president), was on the school board, and established and served as president of Annapolis Banking and Trust. His descendants continued the dual interests in law and journalism. His son, Ridgely Prentiss Melvin, was the editor and publisher of the Maryland Gazette and the Evening Capital, in addition to serving as Judge of the Circuit Court. Ridgely P. Melvin, Jr., George Melvin’s grandson, also served in the House of Delegates and as judge on both the Circuit Court and the Court of Special Appeals.

Cross the street and study the three *Norway maples*. Note the large five-lobed leaves, the spread of the branches, style of bark and ample shade. Norway maples are a fast-growing European species well suited to city life.



Norway maple

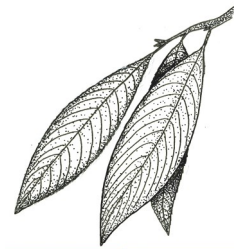
Venture back across the street and wander up Melvin Avenue (away from the school) towards the two large *sugar maples* on the left at 403 Melvin. How are the leaves, trunk and bark different from those of the Norway maple?



sugar maple

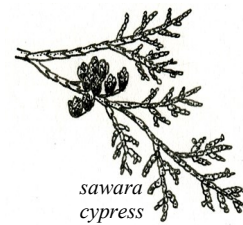
Our native sugar maples can live 300 years, but they are not as tolerant of air pollution as the Norway maple. These are the trees that are tapped in the spring for their sweet sap: the source of maple syrup. In the autumn, their leaves turn yellow, orange and deep red. Sugar maple leaves are pictured on the Canadian flag.

Across Tolson Street, at 311 Melvin, is a large *weeping cherry*. A native of Japan, this tree is covered with beautiful, delicate blossoms in the spring. As you continue up Melvin Avenue, notice the variety of evergreen trees on both sides of the street. At the corner with Shiley, cross Melvin and look more closely at the tall evergreen with the reddish fluted trunk at 300 Melvin.



weeping cherry

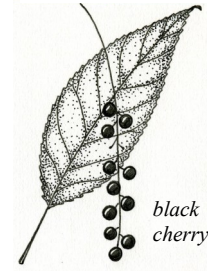
This is a *sawara cypress*. How do you tell the age of a tree? Counting tree rings is an effective technique, but not appropriate for a walking tour. History can also provide some clues. Sawara cypress were first introduced to this country from Japan in 1861, seven years after Admiral Perry secured a treaty of friendship and commerce with that nation—“opening Japan to the West.” The species was popular as a landscaping tree sixty or seventy years ago. So, how old do you think this particular tree might be?



sawara cypress

The large, spreading tree on the corner is a *black cherry*, one of our native successional species, which establish rapidly along

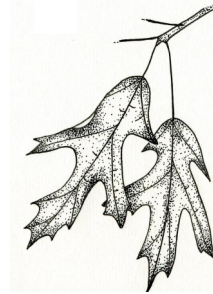
roadsides and on abandoned farmland. Note the dark brown, thick, rough bark. Black cherries are usually planted by some of the seventy species of birds that relish their fruit. (Some birds have been known to stagger after consuming too many slightly fermented cherries.) Black bears, foxes, chipmunks, rabbits, raccoons and squirrels eat whatever fruit they can find. In the Appalachians, black cherries often live 150-200 years. Forest-grown trees cannot spread like this one but are forced to grow tall and straight. As a result, these trees produce fine wood for cherry furniture, paneling and cabinets.



black
cherry

Looking diagonally across Melvin Avenue, towards 207 Melvin, you see several large *southern red oaks*, trees of the coastal plain, typically seen on warm, rich, sandy soils.

Southern red oaks are not usually transplanted because of their deep taproot, so who may have been the gardeners for these trees? Probably squirrels. Squirrels tend to bury red oak acorns, rather than eating them immediately. They do not eat acorns that have sprouted. Red oak acorns sprout later than those of white oaks, so they are safe to bury and store for a hungrier time.



southern red oak

Though fast-growing, southern red oaks can live several hundred years. These particular southern red oaks stand on a spot where there was a grove of trees drawn on the 1868 plat of the Pinkney Farm. Are they the same ones? Or their descendants? A bit of a mystery.

Continue walking up the right side of Melvin Avenue, past the blue, flat-roofed house thought to have been built around 1885. At 210 Melvin, note the *red Japanese cut-leaf maple*. The finely divided foliage is fern-like and lends a soft, flowing contour to this slow-growing tree. With its short curved trunk and low sweeping branches, few attain the height of a tree, but a tree it is,

and one of the most beautiful. To the left is a good example of a *crape myrtle*, a species abundant in our community and popular for its white, pink or purple blooms in summer. Standing a bit further on is a tall *Colorado blue spruce*, a tree of the central Rocky Mountains. In our area they are planted as ornamentals and range in color from gray-green to bluish-green. But in Colorado and Utah they cloak the mountains up to about 10,000 feet.



Cross to the left side of Melvin Ave at the corner of Melvin and Claude Street. In the 1960s, the new owners of the home to your left (201 Melvin) decided to replace the siding. Underneath, they found the perfectly preserved siding you see before you. That wasn't the only discovery. A young man stopped by, visiting the home his grandfather had built around 1927. "Did you know that this was a Sears Roebuck home?" he asked. Their home had a name, "Vallonia," and had been ordered from a Sears and Roebuck catalogue. The siding, solid cypress, had been accurately described in the catalogue as "the wood eternal."

Gaze back along Melvin Avenue towards the school. You are standing on the dividing line between two of the original land grants from the early colonial days of Maryland. From Claude Street and stretching before you into Admiral Heights is "Norwood," the 230 acres John Norwood patented (or received the right to) in 1658. Behind you, including all of Wardour, is "Norwood's Recovery," patented by Andrew Norwood, John's son, twenty-eight years later in 1686. What could have been the reason they waited so long to secure the property? Some clues might be in the topography of this zone and in the history of the time.

ZONE 3: THE RIDGE:

All of West Annapolis and Wardour lies on the massive Aquia Deposit, a geological feature laid down in estuarine environments over fifty million years ago. These greensands, rich in minerals, were contoured by wave action as they finally rose above sea level. Often long sandbars were superimposed on the older geological deposit. The ridge stretching behind Claude Street may be of such origin.

The Norwoods: John Norwood arrived in 1650 with a wife, two children and two servants. He became the first sheriff of Providence County (later Anne Arundel) and was paid in tobacco. All the land in the colony had been given to Lord Baltimore by the King of England. Settlers were promised acreage according to the number of people they brought into the colony. In 1658, John Norwood took advantage of the land for settlement and was granted “Norwood.” Over time he acquired other property and, at his death in 1673, his estate was valued at 82,310 pounds of tobacco. Could some have been grown on “Norwood?” Andrew, his son, became a commissioner and helped to lay out the town of Annapolis. Andrew’s son, also Andrew, lived here and leased a portion of the land to John Hart, then the Governor-in-Chief of the Province of Maryland. In 1718, Andrew sold the entire property to his brother-in-law, John Beale. The plantation was called “Norwood’s Beale.”

The tree to the left of the Claude Street sign has been termed the “grandfather of the *dogwoods*” for its age, stature and beauty. Claude Street itself has become synonymous with beautiful flowering dogwoods. Notice the distinctive leaves and bark. Close to the dogwood is an equally impressive *American holly*, one of the tallest in the community. Turn left and begin walking down Claude Street. You may want to count the number of homes with dogwoods along this short stretch of street and notice the different varieties and uses of the holly.

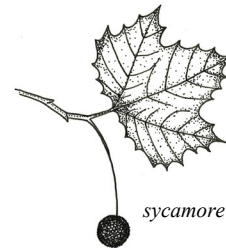


Many of the homes on your right were built in 1932 as housing for Navy personnel. Modeled after the California-style bungalow, they incorporated porches and half columns. This row of homes is a distinctive neighborhood feature strikingly visible on aerial photographs since the 1930s.

Trees were important boundary markers in the early land grants. Along with the river, creek, and cove, oaks and pines marked John Norwood's property. Black walnuts defined the limits of Andrew Norwood's. Continue along Claude until you encounter a property whose boundary is marked by the tall white, green and brown mottled trunk and branches of a *sycamore* (clue: beginning of second block on left).

Sycamores are the most massive of the trees of the eastern forest and can live 500-600 years. Groups of sycamores are often a clue to the rich, moist soils along stream beds.

Cavities in older trees provide dens for raccoons and opossums, or nests for wood ducks or owls. Note the large, distinctively-shaped leaves. Sycamore fruits, small tight brown hanging balls, often remain on the tree throughout the winter. This particular tree is a cheerful sight against a winter sky.



Beyond the sycamore stands a *Norway spruce*, a tall, symmetrical, evergreen with upward-curving branches clothed with tassel-like foliage. A native of northern Europe, Norway spruce wood has been used for cabinets and sounding boards for violins.



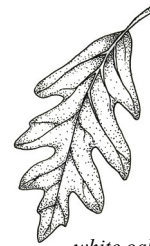
Further down Claude Street, to the right, notice the holly hedge: twenty trees trimmed to form a very effective boundary. Across the street is a double-trunked sycamore, sometimes signaling a tree that has grown again from a stump.

Part of the beauty of Claude Street is the role trees play in the overall landscape design. In addition to shade, they create balance and visual interest. The white house on the right corner of Claude and Scott Drive stood treeless in 1950. Today, one of the finest *silver maples* in the neighborhood grows on the right side of the property. One of two species of “shaggy bark” trees at this corner, silver maples have deeply cut dull green leaves that are silvery white below. The leaves are held on fine stalks allowing them to rustle, flip and turn in the breeze. The tree can appear green one minute and silver the next depending on the wind.



silver maple

Across Claude Street is an adolescent of the other shaggy bark species, the *white oak*. This particular tree, named Blanche Wyatt du Bois, is a descendant of the Wye Oak, until recently the champion tree of white oaks. While southern red oaks and black oaks have points on the tips of their leaves, white oak leaves have rounded edges. The scaly bark becomes more pronounced as the tree ages and may be more visible on the older white oak on the left as you turn onto Scott Drive. This tree demonstrates the spreading branches and rounded crown characteristic of fine white oaks. These trees are “masting” species, meaning they produce huge quantities of acorns every 4-10 years, and some years, no acorns at all. Squirrels tend to eat white oak acorns quickly as they do not “keep” as well as those of the red or black oaks. A white oak may live 600 years and produce 2000-7000 acorns in abundant years.



white oak

Turn right onto Scott Drive and begin walking up the ridge. Halfway up, notice the soft-looking, long needles of the *white pines* to your left. White pines are distinctive among eastern pines in appearance and their place in our history. Their branches are whorled around the trunk and each



white pine

“leaf” is a bundle of five needles. You can estimate the age of the tree by counting the number of whorles of branches. Vast forests of white pines stretched across New England in colonial days. Trees could grow over 200 feet tall. The wood was light but very strong, ideal for masts of swift sailing ships. Britain lacked any comparable species and reserved the very best in the colonies for His Majesty’s Navy. Suitable trees were marked with the King’s Broad Arrow; cutting them could result in forfeiture of the land. Settlers, dressed like Indians, fought back, cutting trees under cover of darkness, sawing them into smaller pieces and floating them downriver to sell. In 1775, New England patriots fought to prevent any more masts from falling into British hands. The white pine forests seemed endless, and this pine was our major timber tree—utilized for furniture, construction and any task where strength and lightness were critical—until the early 1900s when the truly great trees were gone.

ZONE 4: THE OLD WOODS

As you approach the top of the ridge, glance to your right. The trees are a mixture of black, southern red and white oaks. You are about to enter a different and unique world, the immensity of an old woods.



In 1868, according to the plat for the Pinkney farm, the area north of Westwood Road to the Severn River (including Wardour Drive, Sherwood Road and across Alden Lane to rejoin Wardour Drive) was forest. The presence of scattered white oaks, often of considerable size and age, suggest that although logged for farm timbers, the area has consistently remained wooded. Beyond the homes to the left, you can see the Severn River and sense that you are on top of the cliffs. This is a portion of the neighborhood cut by deep ravines and is not suitable for agriculture. The tallest trees occur in the deeper ravines. The small valleys and hidden wetlands offer habitat for a wide variety of plants and animals.

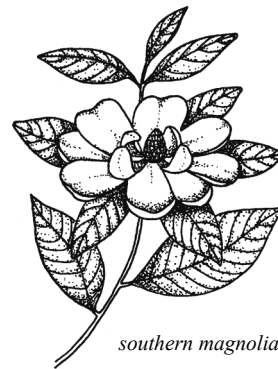
Stroll through the woods towards the tall evergreens on your right (225 Westwood). *Eastern hemlocks* naturally prefer cool stream valleys and north-facing slopes. They carry their short, flat needles in flat sprays, creating the densest shade of any forest tree. In fact, young hemlocks usually cannot grow in the shade of their parents. Cones on a hemlock mean it is at least 20 years old. Native Americans used the hemlock for many medicinal purposes, but not as a poison. Poison hemlock is an Old World plant. Can you find the sawara cypress among the hemlocks? Before moving on, note the American holly, pruned in the conical style popular since colonial days.



Eastern hemlock

Three houses down on your right (215 Westwood) stand two elegant sawara cypress, with multiple trunks and a true oriental flavor.

Across the street (224 Westwood), next to the large American holly, is a distinctly southern evergreen – the *southern magnolia*. With dark glossy leaves and large white blossoms, these trees are “truly satisfying in every way,” according to Mrs. Talbott who planted them. While her husband was building the Chesapeake Bay Bridge, Mrs. Talbott was creating a home. She chose house plans from a book in the library—a home designed by Royal Barry Wells, a famous New England architect. A local builder was able to recreate the home. Wells’ homes are characterized by windows extending to the roofline and distinctive chimneys. The southern magnolias added grace to the landscaping. Many of the magnolias throughout the neighborhood are related to these trees. Mrs. Talbott would save seedlings in coffee cans and give them as welcoming gifts to new neighbors.



southern magnolia

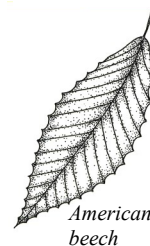
As a side trip, you may want to turn left and explore Wardour Drive, the home of the majority of the community's white oaks. However, the main tour continues towards Wardour Circle and, for a brief time, leaves the Old Woods behind.

To your right (207 Wardour Drive), the wide-open spaces represent a relatively recent woodland, an old-field forest. The large trees are no longer oaks but *tuliptrees*, the tallest of our native eastern hardwoods. Note the long, straight trunks, deeply furrowed bark, and distinctive broad leaves. By nature and preference these trees help us understand the landscape.



Tuliptrees are common in old fields, and they persist as the field changes into forest. Most of our tuliptrees are found in Wardour. Many are quite old and testify that this area was extensively used for agriculture. Though often called tulip poplar, tuliptrees are members of the magnolia family, with tender roots requiring a rich, moist soil. The comparable old-field forest tree of West Annapolis is the southern red oak, which prefers sandy, dry soils.

Included in this woodland are two *American beeches*. Even as it ages, the beech retains its youthful appearance and smooth bark. These trees were often a signal of rich agricultural soil to early pioneers. Notice how the beech grips the earth while the tuliptree seems to spring directly from the soil. In winter, beeches hold their leaves like white ghosts throughout a forest. Their small fruits, beechnuts, were a principal part of the Iroquois Indian's diet. Here they would provide food for birds, squirrels and raccoons.



As you continue towards Wardour Circle, glance to your left at the row of tall white pines. Imagine how the forests of New England must have appeared to the early colonists and to His Majesty's foresters.

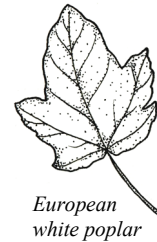
The tree in the center of the circle is a *hawthorn*. Small dense trees with long spines, hawthorns offer good nesting sites for birds. Botanists disagree on how many species of hawthorn exist in North America. Distinct species are very difficult to identify. *Haw* comes from the same root as hedge, and a thicket of hawthorns is a very effective barrier. One could wonder about the roots of Nathaniel Hawthorn's name.

The woven hanging nests of Baltimore orioles have periodically been seen along the edges of branches in the tops of the tuliptrees behind the circle to your right as you continue down Wardour Drive.

A test: Can you identify the maple at the corner of Wardour Drive and Arundel Road? Is it a Norway, sugar, red or silver maple?

Further along Wardour Drive, technology has invaded several trees to your right. The second tree (22 Wardour Drive) shows the effects of creative pruning on the normally tall, straight tuliptree. How is this tree different than those you have seen, or those directly behind it?

Just beyond the tuliptree, you encounter a contrast in tree styles. To the right are the graceful, upward sweeping trunks of the *European white poplars*. Their bark is white like a birch, as is the underside of their leaves. These leaves dance in the wind like those of an aspen. Across the street is a robust *willow oak*. Willow oaks grow rapidly, becoming large, spreading shade trees often planted around commercial buildings or along streets. However, some of the oldest, most beautiful willow oaks in our community are along Wardour Drive. Their leaves are long and slender like a willow tree but with bristles at the tips. These are true oaks, producing abundant, small acorns.



European white poplar



willow oak

Stretching behind the willow oak and down to the river is the remaining remnant of the Old Woods. The woods are worth exploring, but for now, turn right onto the Old Railroad Bridge.

Old Railroad Bridge

In 1886, Miss Elizabeth Giddings sold five acres of her property as a right-of-way for the railroad. The first regular train of the Annapolis and Baltimore Short Line Railroad traveled over these tracks on March 9, 1887. It took 80 minutes to reach the Baltimore station. In 1908, the line became electrified and the name changed to the Maryland Electric Railway. Some of the poles and signals can still be seen from the bridge looking towards the Severn River. The train crossed the Severn on a wooden trestle bridge and stopped at Wardour and in West Annapolis before going on into town. Over time, debt and other forms of transportation caused the railroad to abandon passenger service (1950) and finally freight service. The last freight train passed under this bridge in 1967.

What do you see as you gaze from either side of the bridge? Remnants of history? Wasted space? A jungle of green? In reality, this is the home of a community of hearty pioneers, an area of change, disturbance, usefulness and hope.

Who are these pioneers or settlers, and what are they doing? These are tree species that can come into an inhospitable neighborhood and make it a home. Most grow rapidly, thrive on lots of sunshine, and pass on an environment where more shade-tolerant trees can grow. In the process, they reclaim land, sometimes improving the soil, and provide structure, food sources, hiding places and homes for a wide variety of birds, insects and wildlife. Together, these species have turned a deserted railroad bed into a wildlife corridor in the midst of a residential neighborhood. They have formed an ecotone—an edge where forest, field, slopes and a glen meet. Ecotones are the richest places to discover wildlife. Not only can fox and rabbit travel without encountering people, but birds can lurk in the

underbrush, hide in low branches, or flit in the tops of trees. Migrating songbirds find a safe haven here. The bridge provides an elevated view of the tree community.

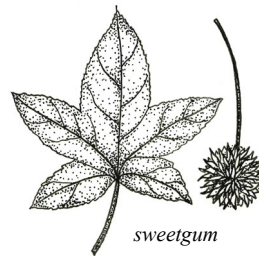
Who lives in this tree community?

First, the *slippery elm*, which is named for its slick inner bark. It was not an early pioneer but grew as shade became available. Feel the leaves of the tree growing next to the left side of the Wardour Drive entrance to the bridge. These leaves are elliptical with one portion of the bottom a bit smaller than the other giving it a slightly off-balanced shape. The leaves have a scratchy surface. Today we hear of the search for medicines among the plants of the tropical rain forest. However, here before us is an example from our own forest. Slippery elm's inner bark was used in dressing wounds, sold as a treatment for cholera and as a tea for sore throats, and was included in a rural doctor's pharmacy. Even today, slippery elm is used in some throat lozenges.



slippery elm

Next to the slippery elm, you can see the star-shaped leaves of the *sweetgum*. This tree may be most familiar for the red, purple and orange colors of fall or its abundance of hanging, spiky brown balls. Its scientific name is *Liquidambar* and refers to the gum or resin that exudes from wounds in the tree. As recently as the Second World War, this resin formed the basis for salves and tobacco flavoring. In earlier days, it was used to cure everything from skin troubles to dysentery.



sweetgum

From the right side of the bridge, by the entrance, look down on the mitten-shaped leaves of the *sassafras*. These are true edge trees, preferring a lot of sunshine. Their leaves can have one, two, or no lobes on the



sassafras

same tree. Though they do not live long, their fruit feeds at least eighteen species of birds. Spicebush swallowtail butterfly caterpillars feast on sassafras. Sassafras tea was once an all-around folk remedy. The bark from the sassafras was the first forest product exported from the New World (1603).

Along the far left side of the bridge, you encounter a new *oak* - *swamp chestnut oak* or *basket oak*. The leaves are similar to the chestnut oak: oblong, toothed, broader in the middle like a football. But the bark is grayish and scaly, like a white oak. This is a young tree and the lower leaves are broader than those higher on the tree.

Competition for food is fierce, and if light is the source of energy, then broader leaves in the most difficult area makes sense. The wood has a tendency to split into fine ribbons of fiber, perfect for weaving baskets. In the south, these baskets were used for carrying cotton from the farm fields.



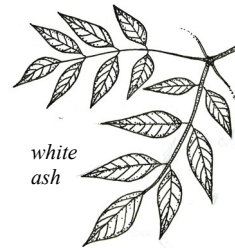
swamp chestnut oak

To the right and behind the chestnut oak, appearing almost like a weather-beaten relic of wood, is an old *black locust*. Black locusts were used as fence posts because of their resistance to decay. With deeply furrowed bark and feathery, compound, rounded leaves, this is a true pioneer. The black locust grows rapidly, seldom lives over 100 years, demands lots of sunlight and is able to survive on poor soils. In fact, it fertilizes the soil itself. A legume, similar to peas and peanuts, the black locust takes nitrogen from the air, and with the help of bacteria, changes it into a form plants can utilize. As the tree ages, this nitrogen goes into the soil for other species to use.



black locust

Next to the far left side of the bridge, near the Kent Road exit, is a young *white ash*. Ash also have compound leaves: many small leaflets attached to a leaf stem, which is then attached to a twig. In the white ash the leaves are arranged in opposite pairs. These are trees of slopes and close to streams. They can grow a bit in shade but need sunlight to reach maturity. Several mature white ash are found at the end of Norwood Road. White ash is “the” tree for making baseball bats because the wood is tough, resilient, pliable and light.



The old railroad bridge is an unexpected place of hope and creativity. On the surface it may seem a jumble, but some of the most fruitful, productive, determined trees in our neighborhood live here.

ZONE 5: THE OLMSTED DESIGN

Stepping off the bridge onto Kent Road, you may sense you are entering a park. Miss Elizabeth Giddings and Frederick Law Olmsted, Jr. would have been very pleased.

The Giddings: In 1884, Luther Giddings died. He had been a Major in the Mexican War (1846-48) and a delegate to the Maryland Constitutional Convention in 1867. He had sold two small parcels of Norwood's Beale, but the majority was intact when his daughters, Katherine Giddings Aldridge and Elizabeth Giddings, inherited it in 1884. They enlisted George T. Melvin's help in 1890 to subdivide the land. Katherine died in 1899. Her son, Robert Giddings Aldridge, later helped Elizabeth manage the development of Wardour. Elizabeth died in her 60s in 1921. The *Maryland Gazette* reported that she had had a wide circle of friends in Annapolis, had relatives in Scotland, and had lived for many years in Carvel Hall, an old Annapolis hotel. She is buried in St. Anne's Cemetery.

Frederick Law Olmsted, Jr. carried on the tradition and work of his father, Frederick Law Olmsted, Sr. As the nation grew, so did concern for making cities more hospitable places. F.L. Olmsted, Sr. was a pioneer in the movement to create public parks and the founder of American landscape architecture. He designed many of our famous parks and monuments, including Central Park in New York City and the grounds of the U.S. Capitol Building. F.L. Olmsted, Sr. died in 1903, but the firm continued until 1980. In addition to their work here in Wardour, they designed many of the parks and college campuses around Baltimore.

Walk towards the long row of evergreens on your right and look up into the tall crown of the tree next to the telephone pole. Like an evergreen, but with a dancing, mysterious, feathery quality, this is a *dawn redwood*.

In 1941, a Japanese scientist who was digging for plant fossils encountered a new specimen with cones like a sequoia but leaves and stems similar to a bald cypress. This species, which he named *Metasequoia* (akin to sequoia), was thought to have been extinct for 5 million years. Also in 1941, a Chinese forester discovered three unusual conifers (cone-bearing evergreen-type trees) in a very remote village. Not only were they an unknown species, but they lost their leaves in winter. Due to the inaccessibility of the site, lost specimens, bandits, and war, the trees were not identified for five more years. Then they made headlines. Not only were they a new class or genus of trees, but they were living metasequoias, living fossils! Where had they been for 5 million years? In a few remote valleys in China. Seeds collected from one of the trees for Harvard's Arnold Arboretum were sent to botanic gardens around the world. In 1948, an American scientist, re-examining fossil evidence, discovered that the metasequoia had actually been the dominant conifer of the arctic forests 63 million years ago, not the sequoia as previously believed. So, when you gaze at the dawn redwood, you can picture what trees might have looked like while the Rocky Mountains were being formed.

Dawn redwoods now grace many gardens (three additional trees are found at 4 Norwood Road), but they are critically endangered in the wild. They grow rapidly and can live 600 years. What do you think our neighborhood will be like in 2590 when this tree becomes a senior citizen?

As you continue your walk down Kent Road, you will pass two of the top five properties for tree diversity in the entire community. Both 6 and 9 Kent Road are similar to a specific type of park: an arboretum, places where many kinds of trees and shrubs are grown for study, display and pleasure. Note the graceful branches, bark and leaves of the *Japanese maple* at 6 Kent Road. Although the red-purple variety is most often seen, the species is green in the wild. Trees grown from the seed of a reddish tree usually revert to the green state. The autumn color of green trees is vivid, some being a dark wine-red, others yellow or orange. Squirrels relish Japanese maple seeds and they hang by their hind feet to reach the ends of slender branches. This property is also home to one of the oldest black walnuts in the neighborhood.

Across the street, at 9 Kent Road, more mature native species, such as silver maple, tuliptree and white ash form a backdrop for younger magnolias, *purple English beech*, crape myrtles, *Kousa dogwood*, and *deodar cedars*.



silver maple



tulip tree



white ash

Pause at the intersection of Kent and Norwood Roads. Miss Giddings was prompted to contact Frederick Law Olmsted, Jr. by the property at 4 & 6 Norwood Road (behind the Dead End sign).

Wardour Bluffs: George T. Melvin had used the same grid pattern of small lots when platting these rolling hills as he had used in the flatter farm fields of West Annapolis.

But the Giddings had a different vision for this portion of their land. They wanted to create a “little colony or parked suburb of congenial people.” They had resisted selling any of the property until they could get their asking price - \$1000 an acre. Finally, in 1907, when Professor Stevens, USNA, wanted to buy two acres, Miss Giddings contacted Frederick Law Olmsted, Jr. for help in bringing her vision into reality. She wrote that she was half-owner of “far and away the most beautiful and valuable tract of land in the vicinity.” She asked him to divide the tract into good building sites of an acre or more according to the “natural configuration of the land.” She did not see the need for paved streets or sidewalks but wanted a well-planned roadway making the lots accessible by land as well as water. “The exact line for homes to stand on need not be planned; it will all be more irregular.” Frederick Law Olmsted, Jr. visited several times during the summer of 1907. Not only did he create a new design for property boundaries and roadways, but he also advised Miss Giddings on clearing small trees and brush to open views to the river. He put her in touch with the Anti-Mosquito Association since malaria and other mosquito-borne diseases were health concerns at the time. Professor Stevens’ property became Lot 1 Block 1 (4 & 6 Norwood Road).

As you turn right and wander down the hill on Norwood Road, you enter into Frederick Law Olmsted, Jr.’s design, drawing on the natural beauty and characteristics of the landscape in planning a community. Most lots, particularly on the left, are as he proposed them in 1907. The road follows the contours of the land.

At the bottom of the hill, on the left, is a small wetland, often home to red-winged blackbirds. On your right, at the corner with Ridge Road, a stream has created a lovely woodland garden habitat well suited to the *weeping willow*. Although a native of China, this tree must have reminded Linnaeus, the great Swedish botanist, of a verse from the Psalms, for he gave it the scientific name *Salix babylonica*.

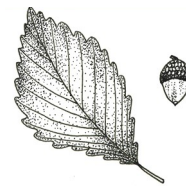


weeping willow

“By the rivers of Babylon, there we sat and wept, when we remembered Zion. Upon the willows in the midst of it we hung our harps.” Psalm 137:1,2

What might the willow be telling us by the way it droops its branches and holds its leaves? Not that it is sad, but perhaps that it is always thirsty. Willows need a lot of water. The long, narrow leaves, held perpendicular to the sun, enable the tree to gather low, diffused light while not enduring the heat stress caused by concentrated sunshine on broad flat surfaces. Willows retain so much water that if a branch breaks off it can actually root and grow into a new tree.

As you continue up the hill, on your right at 207 Norwood you encounter a double-trunk mature *swamp chestnut oak* in all its glory (silver scaly bark, oblong toothed leaves). Throughout this walk, different oaks have been associated with different zones, climates, soils. The majority of the swamp chestnut oaks are found here on the southern side of our peninsula where the soils are warm and moist.



swamp chestnut oak

Across the street is another tree indicative of these environmental conditions – a *bitternut hickory* (just beyond the driveway and evergreen at 208 Norwood Road). Named for their inedible fruit, bitternuts are trees of moist woods and bottomlands. They can be recognized by their compound leaves, usually with nine leaflets on a slender stem. Their nut is encased in a rounded husk, pointed on the end. If left alone, much of this area would eventually become an oak-hickory forest.



bitternut hickory

The sweetgum also prefers warm, moist soils, so it is not surprising that most of our sweetgums are found here. Begin with the mature *sweetgum* across the street from the



sweetgum

entry to Essex Road and see how many trees you can spot as you gaze back through the woods along Essex Road or up the hill. Look for their evidence, either the star-shaped leaves against the sky or brown spiky seedpods on the ground. Several other swamp chestnut oaks are at the top of the hill to your left—different trunk and branch styles, but recognizable by their bark and leaves.

Together, these three trees demonstrate that it is not only Frederick Law Olmsted, Jr.'s design that gives Norwood Road a different "feel" than Scott Drive or Tucker Landing. Temperature and soil conditions combine to create the living backdrop, an ecosystem, for each of these areas.

In 1910, Frederick Law Olmsted, Jr. sent Elizabeth Giddings an article written by his father: "Village Improvement." She replied, "I believe I understand the truth this article teaches and your application of it. I know the thing you have been doing on our land, for instance, and the carrying out of it that we have undertaken is far more difficult than to make just one beautiful home, this teaming up of a beautiful piece of woodland and dividing it into dozens of small spaces, and yet retain the harmony as a whole, is perhaps impossible; but we will try."

As you pass 217 Norwood, notice the *southern magnolia*. When the new owners began tidying their garden, they noticed a magnolia branch peeking out of a mass of vines. As they began removing the vines they discovered this magnolia, as well as the American holly, its close neighbor. Both trees had suffered, since the shroud of vines had cut off their energy source—sunlight. The new owners were excited for they knew that the former owner, Mrs. Gorman, used to read children stories under a magnolia. Could they have uncovered "the" story tree?



The old railroad crossing marks the end of Wardour Bluffs. Just before you leave this zone, gaze to your left, into the woods, across the old railroad bed. In those woods is the tree that began the quest to understand our community, our history and our trees. The leaves are dark green, shaped together like a fan, similar to a horse chestnut. In the spring, flowers stand erect on top of the leaves, and in late summer, nuts in round yellow balls cling to the leaves. These are *yellow buckeyes*. The large, glossy, nut-like seeds were sometimes carried in the pocket as a souvenir or perhaps as good luck. However, they are poisonous if eaten. These are the only buckeyes in our community and they are seldom planted in Anne Arundel County. Could a seed have been thrown from a passing train? Are they related to the large buckeyes outside the Naval Academy Chapel? No one knows, and it remains a tantalizing mystery.



As you continue across the railroad tracks, you enter:

The Transition Zone

The Intersection of Old Woods, the Ridge and Farm Fields

In 1909, Miss Giddings persuaded Frederick Law Olmsted, Jr. to visit and walk her property north of the railroad. He created a new design for roadways and home sites, encompassing all of the area now known as Wardour. In 1910, she wrote to tell him that they now had a “stop” at the river. The railroad had not built a station there yet, but she expected a “good one” due to the number of people “going out to Wardour.” She had also begun to build a house “on the open block of smaller lots just across the railroad from the Krafft Bungalow.” Where was this? The Krafft property was what is now 213, 217 Norwood Road, so 100 Old Crossing Lane is probably the site of the home she was building. If, and for how long she may have lived here is uncertain, because she sold the land in 1915.

If oaks have been key to the various zones, then the corner of Giddings and Old Crossing Lane is one of the most fascinating hillocks in the neighborhood (another is Arundel Place). Almost all of our oaks have at least one representative here—a meeting of the warmer southern side with the ridge and the dryer soils of West Annapolis. There are swamp chestnut oaks mixed with young hickories and evergreens at 100 Old Crossing Lane, and almost no oaks among the tuliptrees of 101 Old Crossing. You will find chestnut, black and southern red oaks, particularly in the grove stretching between Claude Street and Old Crossing Lane on the north side of Giddings. Oaks, especially those with similarly shaped leaves, can be hard to identify, but each has a distinctive acorn shape. The different oaks mixed with hickories make this a lovely hillside to visit in the autumn.

The blue-green evergreen at 101 Giddings is an *Atlas cedar*. Several are found throughout the neighborhood, but they are native to the Middle East and Africa. Part of our richness comes from these immigrants, selected and planted on purpose to perform a specific function or for pleasure.

The hedge of soft *Leyland cypress* on your right as you descend the hill down Giddings Avenue is another example. The Leyland cypress is a hybrid, offspring of two species of trees that do not normally inter-breed: the Monterey cypress and the Alaska cedar. Both are west coast natives, but the hybrid came to America from Great Britain. From the early 1700s the British have been passionate plant collectors, bringing seeds and plants from all parts of the world to the British Isles. In 1888, in South Wales, C.J. Leyland discovered that a Monterey cypress and an Alaska cedar had accidentally produced six seedlings. This was the beginning of the Leyland cypress. In 1944, the first root cuttings (the only way the trees can be propagated) came to America. By the 1990s the Leyland cypress had become one of the most popular trees for creating screens and hedges.

Giddings Avenue is a combination of old fields to the right and hills lining the railroad right-of-way to the left. Trees that are in

the process of reclaiming the land are mixed with new plantings. Several large *black locusts* are on your left at 120 Giddings, recognizable by their feathery compound leaves and deeply furrowed bark. For a closer view of young trees, look just behind the sign for Epstein Lane. In the evening and on rainy days, the leaflets may fold up and the leaves droop. In addition to their task of fertilizing the soil and preventing erosion, these are the trees of an old “crabbers tale.” If the locusts have an abundance of blossoms in the spring then, according to this old belief, the crabs should be abundant as well.



black locust

If you pause at the corner of Giddings Avenue and Shiley Street, you can discover this combination of old-field succession and purposeful planting. In the 1930s there were very few trees along Shiley Street: one on the left corner at Giddings, a few at the dead end and several more near Melvin Avenue. The land was open fields. To the left, behind the group of trees at the corner, you can see the tops of three tall, narrow poplars. There are many varieties of poplar, and they are often planted to define boundary lines or as windbreaks.

To your right, at 100 Shiley, are several *northern* (or *hardy*) *catalpas*. Identified by the large, heart-shaped leaves and cigar-like pods, catalpas were popular on large Maryland estates long ago. Many residents remember walking under clouds of white blossoms when catalpas lined Melvin Avenue. Now there are only a few throughout the community.



northern catalpa

Across the street to your right is a line of three *Virginia pines*, characteristic of much of the Mid-Atlantic coastal plain of which we are a part. Virginia pines move into old fields and form thickets, holding the soil while other trees, such as redbud, dogwood, and other hardwoods begin to take root. Notice how the color and shape of the needles, as well as the form of the Virginia

pine, differ from neighboring white pines.



Shiley, Tolson and Tucker Streets dead-end at the railroad. Each has a different feel and is worth exploring as a side trip from this tour. Tolson was a forest well after the 1930s, while Tucker Street boasted quite a few homes and a relationship to the railroad. For now, see how many trees you can recognize as you walk down Giddings towards Tolson Street. One gem, in between two silver maples on your right, is a *corkscrew* or *curly willow*. Not only are the leaves curly, but so are the branches.

Off to your right, down Tolson Street, was once an apple orchard. The trees are gone, but one 91-year-old resident remembers stopping on her way home from Green Street Elementary School and sampling the apples found here. A few apple trees of unknown ages are still scattered around the community.

Pause in the middle of the block between Tolson and Tucker Streets. On your right, at 405 Giddings, are two types of Norway maple: a green variety between two purple strains. On the opposite side of the street is another form of landscaping. What may look like “letting nature takes its course” is actually well controlled and planned. The spreading *English purple beech* screens the home from view and creates balance in the midst of an ivy-cloaked bank. This is one of the oldest homes in the community, built around 1900. By the 1930s, the evergreens, the Norway spruce, and eastern redcedars were already tall, prominent neighborhood features.



As you continue down Giddings you will begin to enter our business community—an area that combines family living with business and trade. The boundary is Segelkian Lane, and just beyond the sign you encounter a one-of-a-kind tree for our neighborhood: a *water oak*. If choosing their own place to live, water oaks would select very moist soils and swamps similar to those on the Eastern Shore. Notice their small wedge-shaped leaves. In our community, whether due to natural causes or human intention, we have oak representatives of almost every type of habitat, from wet to very dry.



water oak

ZONE 6: OUR BUSINESS COMMUNITY

In 1890, by an act of the Maryland Legislature, West Annapolis became an incorporated town. Residents could elect three commissioners whose main tasks were to care for the streets, maintain order and pass ordinances. These officials could levy fines and even send troublemakers to jail. The first commissioners were George T. Melvin, William S. Ridgely, and J. West Aldridge, Catherine Giddings' husband.

George Melvin wrote, "The name West Annapolis was adopted by the charter of incorporation because of the contiguity of the location to the western boundary of the city of Annapolis. Nothing intervenes between this suburb and the city except the beautiful grounds of the U.S. Naval Academy and College Creek." West Annapolis was ideal for those who wanted the amenities of Annapolis but also to "enjoy more elbow room."

The Academy had extended King George Street through their property to a few hundred yards from West Annapolis and what was to become Annapolis Street. Rowe Boulevard did not exist until the 1950s, so Annapolis Street was the community's connection with the city. Residents remember late-night accidents when visitors from Baltimore would lose their way, fail to turn on King George Street, and run off the cliff at the end of Annapolis Street.

From the earliest days, homes have intermingled with businesses throughout this zone. Within the area you find a blending of landscaping styles designed to draw in customers, conceal parking lots, solve a developer's challenge, or grace a home. Representatives of almost half the tree species in our community can be found here. Most of this zone is best explored by automobile, but Annapolis Street deserves a slow wander.

Turn left at the corner of Giddings and Annapolis Street. Walk all the way down to the corner of Annapolis Street and Taylor Avenue. You are standing at the 1890s gateway to our community. From here, residents could walk to Annapolis or take the train to Baltimore and beyond. Glance across at the fire station, the approximate site of the old West Annapolis Train Station. No wonder Annapolis Street became a place to live, shop, dine or relax.

Turn back and pause by the group of trees between numbers 4 and 10 Annapolis Street. The four trees in the back row are very old *eastern redcedars*. Redcedars are one of the ten most abundant trees within the community, but these particular ones are a curiosity. Why are they in such neat rows? Eastern redcedars are often planted by birds sitting on fencerows or along power lines. Cedar waxwings were named for their love of the dark blue cedar berries. Farmers sometimes plant cedars as wind-breaks. Who may have planted the very old, large *pecan* trees further down the hill?



eastern redcedar



pecan

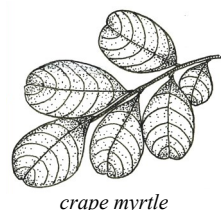
Looking to trees to provide clues to the past can lead us in unexpected directions and still not provide the answers. The obvious candidate for information on the cedars and the pecans would be at 10 Annapolis Street. This is definitely a building that appears to have a history firmly rooted on this street; however, looks can be deceiving. According to old residents, number 10 was the original two-room school house for West Annapolis. Lat-

er, when a new four-room school was built, this became the “Teacherage” or teacher’s home. Prior to the mid 1930s, this home resided on the school property on Melvin Avenue.

What about 12 Annapolis Street? Built between 1913 and 1915, This building was the West Annapolis Methodist Episcopal Church. Many local residents attended this mission church when it occupied the corner of Annapolis Street and Melvin Avenue. In 1933 the church building was sold and moved here to 12 Annapolis Street. Can you imagine how fascinating it must have been to community residents to watch these buildings slowly move up Annapolis Street? A third building on school property was also moved but to the other side of Melvin Avenue.

What about the history of the trees? Perhaps the place to find the answers to the cedar question would be to delve more into the history of what is now 2 Annapolis Street, the only building on this block on George T. Melvin’s plat of 1890.

For now, continue down Annapolis Street to number 14. The trees mirror the owner’s oriental interest and reflect the nature of some of the businesses located here. The *crape myrtles* were selected not only for the color of the flowers but the dramatic red and brown mottled bark. Japanese cutleaf maples and various weeping species of trees add to the sense of harmony. A tall dawn redwood peeks over a white pine. Together these trees invite the customer to visit, to rest and to contemplate. Take some time to explore the many varieties of plants within this small space.



As you wander down the street, see if you can unravel the various strategies businesses use in caring for their properties. Small businesses and larger commercial buildings face different challenges. The businesses at number 24 welcome customers with *flowering cherries*, while across the street, willow oaks screen a



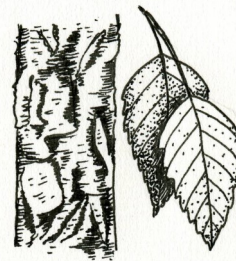
parking lot. Half of our willow oaks are found within this zone. Unlike southern red oaks, willow oaks have shallow roots. Thus they are easy to transplant and have become a viable choice for urban landscaping where privacy and shade are required.

What determines which trees are chosen? For a small businessman, personal interest and reflecting the character of the business might dictate the trees. A developer must abide by certain regulations as well as consider the cost of maintenance, longevity, hardiness of the tree, and safety for customers. Anne Arundel County has created a suggested list of trees to help developers make their choices. Species diversity contributes not only to the beauty of a neighborhood, but also to the overall health of the natural community. Most diseases or insect pests are specific to certain types of trees. Having a wide variety of trees lowers the risk that a community's trees will be decimated by any one disease or insect invasion. Hybrids are sometimes developed to solve a problem and then become popular with developers. Perhaps the hybrid is resistant to a disease, produces few fruits, or is easy to maintain. Bradford pears were popular through the 1970-80s but time has shown that their branches are brittle and break easily in the wind. Often business landscaping can be dated by the plantings. Pin oaks were the trees of the 1950-70s. The pagodatree was popular in the 1990s. Ultimately, soil is the key to tree choice. Will this particular tree survive on this soil? Is it a good investment?

Throughout this zone, a conscious effort to capture and retain a small town atmosphere has encouraged business owners to protect old trees while they plant new ones. It is this combination of old and new that gives Annapolis Street its special appeal.

As you cross Giddings Avenue, notice the two different styles of trees on either side of the street. How do they reflect the nature of the businesses at 100 and 101 Annapolis Street?

River birch (100 Annapolis Street) are

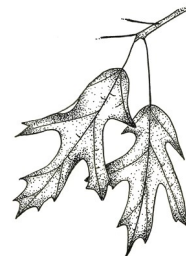


river birch

native to Anne Arundel County and common along parts of the upper Severn River and Severn Run. They are more tolerant of heat than the white birch and are often used as ornamentals in landscaping. River birch bark peels freely and is light pinkish-tan on young trees. River birch has not been an important lumber tree, but in the wild they help maintain the integrity of their environment. They grasp the mud along riverbanks, preventing erosion. Their seeds drop into the river currents and may travel miles before finding a mud bank that needs their attention.

Across the street, at 101 Annapolis, are two slender *European hornbeams*. They share a common name with our American hornbeams found in local forests: “ironwood.” Their wood is so tough that it has been used for drum sticks and, reportedly, for chariots by the ancient Romans. Today, European hornbeam is planted for its shape and character. The tight, upward branches present a sophisticated, formal, perfectly symmetrical shape year-round. These trees adapt to tough conditions such as urban areas where drought, air pollution and other hazards make life hard for a tree. Two species of trees—river birch and European hornbeam—different lifestyles, different feel.

Continue down Annapolis Street towards the tall southern red oak, a reminder of the area’s origin as a farm. The building behind the oak, 104 Annapolis Street, is another Sears-Roebuck home, the “Winonah.” From 1908 to 1940, Sears-Roebuck responded to a need for modern, sturdy housing by offering over 400 designs for ready-to-assemble homes. This reflected the confident philosophy of the time: anyone could build their own home. Sears was there to supply the pattern, directions and materials, down to the plumbing and lighting.



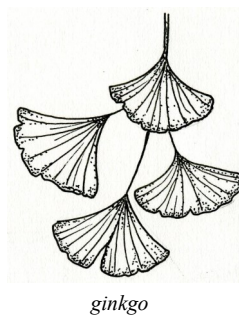
southern red oak

Sears built its reputation on fine craftsmanship. Homes were shipped anywhere rail transport was available. The materials arrived in several installments, timed to be there when needed.

Imagine the anticipation of the owners of this home: picking out the design, waiting for the supplies to come to the West Annapolis Train Station, laying the foundations (avoiding the southern red oak), and watching their house slowly become a reality before them.

Look across the street. Peeking above 105 Annapolis Street can be seen the long branches of a very old *ginkgo* tree. During the spring and summer the tree is often covered with wisteria.

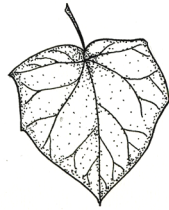
Ginkgos are the sole surviving species of an ancient family of trees dating to the age of dinosaurs. They have unique, dark-green, fan-like leaves that turn bright yellow in the fall. This particular tree is a female, very seldom planted today because female ginkgos produce an abundant crop of unpleasant smelling, messy fruit.



The ginkgo, along with an ancient hemlock and holly best seen from Ridgely Avenue, mark what might be one of the oldest estates in the neighborhood. At 63.3 feet, this is the highest elevation in West Annapolis. A sprawling home occupied the end of this block on George T. Melvin's plat. Elizabeth Giddings sold the property to Frederick W. Shaw in 1906. Mr. Shaw was a coach painter and blacksmith. He had been born in New Hampshire but left a legacy of descendants to our community, recognized by names such as Stallings, Siegert and Nichols.

The Business Community zone challenges us with the impacts of change and the question of what type of community we will become. We see remnants of the past mingled with new development. Within this zone are many fascinating trees including the Japanese pagoda tree, planted in the orient around Buddhist Temples, and the osage orange. Graul's parking lot hosts twelve different species of trees, including the only two English oaks (often overlooked on islands in the center of the parking lot). The Business zone also includes the majority of ailanthus (tree of

heaven), an invasive species that moves into disturbed soils, edging out other trees.



pawlonia



osage orange



English oak



ailanthus

As you walk down Annapolis Street towards the War Memorial and the end of the tour, consider what makes West Annapolis and Wardour a lovely community. We suspect it is a combination of living within the natural landscape and shaping the environment based on interest and creativity. It includes beauty, diversity, color, texture and purpose.

One of the goals of this tour has been to develop eyes to read the landscape and “ears” to listen to the questions raised by the trees. What do they tell us about the soil or environmental conditions, former land use, and history within or outside the community? We have purposefully left some questions unanswered and areas unexplored—opportunities for you to investigate, to talk with residents and to delve more deeply into the life of this neighborhood. Use the chart in the appendix to see how many other species you can find. What will they say to you? Have fun exploring!

Tree Checklist

| Zone 1 Zone 2 Zone 3 Zone 4 Zone 5 Zone 6 | Zone 1 Zone 2 Zone 3 Zone 4 Zone 5 Zone 6 |
|--|--|
| -Ailanthus (Tree of Heaven) | -Cryptomeria (Japanese Cedar) |
| -Apple | -Cypress, Golden False-Cypress, Hinoki |
| -Arborvitae, American | -Cypress, Leland |
| -Arborvitae, Japanese | -Cypress, Sawara |
| -Ash, Green | -Dogwood, Flowering Pink |
| -Ash, White | -Dogwood, Flowering White |
| -Bamboo | -Dogwood, Koussa |
| -Beech, American | -Elm, Siberian |
| -Beech, English (Purple) | -Elm, Slippery |
| -Birch, River | -Gingko |
| -Birch, White | -Hawthorn |
| -Boxelder | -Hemlock, Eastern |
| -Buckeye | -Hickory, Bitternut |
| -Catalpa | -Hickory, Pignut |
| -Cedar, Atlas | -Hickory, Sand |
| -Cedar, Deodar | -Holly, American |
| -Cedar, Red | -Holly, Burford |
| -Cherry, Flowering | -Holly, Nellie Stevens |
| -Cherry, Black (Wild) | -Hornbeam, European |
| -Cherry, European Cultivated | -Juniper, Pfitzer |
| -Cherry, Sweet | -Linden, American (Basswood) |
| -Cherry, Weeping | -Linden, Little-leaf |
| -Chestnut, Chinese | -Locust, Black |
| -Crabapple | -Locust, Honey |
| -Crape Myrtle | |

Zone 1
Zone 2
Zone 3
Zone 4
Zone 5
Zone 6

- Magnolia, Saucer
- Magnolia, Southern
- Magnolia, Star
- Magnolia, Sweet Bay
- Magnolia, Tulip

- Maple, Japanese
Cutleaf Green
- Maple, Japanese
Cutleaf Red
- Maple, Japanese
Green
- Maple, Japanese Red
- Maple, Norway
- Maple, Purple Norway
- Maple, Red
- Maple, Silver
- Maple, Sugar

- Mimosa

- Mulberry, White

- Oak, Black
- Oak, Chestnut
- Oak, English
- Oak, Pin
- Oak, Red Northern
- Oak, Red Southern
- Oak, Sawtooth
- Oak, Swamp Chestnut
- Oak, Water
- Oak, Willow

- Orange, Osage

- Pagoda Tree

- Paulownia

- Peach

- Pear, Bradford
- Pear, Sickle

Zone 1
Zone 2
Zone 3
Zone 4
Zone 5
Zone 6

- Persimmon

- Pine, Austrian
- Pine, Japanese Black
- Pine, Loblolly
- Pine, Mugo
- Pine, Virginia
- Pine, White

- Plum, Flowering
- Plum, Purple

- Poplar, European
White

- Redbud

- Redwood, Dawn

- Sassafras

- Sourgum

- Spruce, Colorado
Blue
- Spruce, Norway

- Sweet Gum

- Sycamore

- Tulip Tree

- Viburnum

- Walnut, Black
- Walnut, English

- Willow, Corkscrew
- Willow, Weeping

- Yew

- Zelkova



Recommended Resources



Eastman, John. *The Book of Forest & Thicket*. Harrisburg, Pa: Stackpole Books, 1992.

Kricher, John C. *A Field Guide to Ecology of Eastern Forests of North America*. The Peterson Field Guide Series. Boston: Houghton Mifflin Company, 1988.

Little, Elbert L. *National Audubon Society Field Guide to North American Trees: Eastern Region*. Chanticleer Press Edition. New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1980.

Peattie, Donald Culross. *A Natural History of Trees of Eastern and Central North America*. Boston: Houghton Mifflin Company, 1991.

Whitman, Ann H., ed. *Familiar Trees of North America: Eastern Region*. Chanticleer Press, Inc. New York: 1989.



Sponsors



Printing of this Walking Tour was made possible through the generous support of the following businesses and community residents:

Bruce C. Angevine, CPA, CFP

104 Forbes Street, Suite 200
Annapolis, MD 21401-1598
www.annapoliscpa.com

*Advisor to businesses and individuals
Serving West Annapolis since 1982*

Jack Martin & Associates, Inc.

111 Forbes Street
Annapolis, MD 21401
410-263-8000

*Meeting all your personal, commercial
and marine insurance needs
Serving West Annapolis since 1973*

Art Things, Inc.

2 Annapolis Street
Annapolis, MD 21401

*Art materials
Serving West Annapolis since 1996*

Graul's Market

607 Taylor Ave.
Annapolis, MD 21401

*Neighborhood supermarket
Serving West Annapolis since 1982*



Sponsors



A Healthier You

14 Annapolis Street
Annapolis, MD 21401

Shiatsu therapy

Serving West Annapolis since 1995

Bon Vivant Antiques & Period Furnishings

Carl Ihli, Owner Capt. USN (Ret.)

104 Annapolis Street
Annapolis, MD 21401

*Vintage porcelain, crystal, lighting
and decorative furnishings*

Serving West Annapolis since 1999

Annapolis Gourmet

Gus Leanos

116 Annapolis Street
Annapolis, MD 21401

Deli sandwiches, soup and conversation

Serving West Annapolis since 1988

From the Neighborhood:

Gretchen Clift

Blanche Wyatt du Bois,
The Admiral and The Abhouse



Contributors



Elliot Abhau: As a Navy junior, Elliot grew up moving in and out of West Annapolis. She first fell in love with the trees while walking to West Annapolis Elementary School from Arundel Estates. Her parents bought a house at the corner of Scott and Claude in 1959, and every other tour of duty, they returned to the neighborhood. Elliot knew she was home when she saw the trees, the great constant in her travels. Delving deeper into the mystery of these same trees has only made them more beautiful. Elliot is a Zero Balancer and Zero Balancing teacher as well as a riding teacher and horse trainer. She is sure her love of trees “down to their bones” in winter taught her to love working with the skeletons of horses and humans.

Colby Rucker: Colby has spent most of his life studying the trees of Anne Arundel County. Not just their names, but their character, their connections to native soils and weather conditions, and what makes them prosper or languish. He has a particular interest in the “great trees,” and delights in measuring these giants of their families. He knows where the old trees are, and knows their history. He believes that you have to experience a tree for a whole year, through all the seasons, before you have a true sense of its value. Colby operated a tree service for 25 years, and was the supervisor of grounds for the state capital complex until retiring in 1998. He is a past president of the Severn River Association and co-author of *Gems of the Severn*.

Ginny Vroblesky: When Ginny’s family moved to West Annapolis in 1962, an old apple tree grew in the front yard, a perfect place for a swing. According to rumor, the whole area had once been an apple orchard. Curiosity prompted Ginny to seek Elliot and Colby’s help in unraveling the story of the neighborhood. What began as an initial attempt to identify a few trees

unfolded into an adventure in natural history, architecture, world history and community memories. Ginny was the National Coordinator of A Rocha USA, a conservation nonprofit, and now enjoys freelance writing.

Laurel Sprenger: After spending three years in the Middle East with A Rocha Lebanon, Laurel moved to West Annapolis in 2003. During frequent walks, Laurel enjoyed watching the changing seasons alter the color and feel of the neighborhood. She has since moved with her family to Maryland's Eastern shore. The trees of Maryland are very different from those she knew during her childhood in northern Canada, and she was pleased to have the opportunity to learn many new species while illustrating this booklet.

